



OCIS NEWS

OXFORD CENTRE FOR ISLAMIC STUDIES

Panel discussion with The Elders on Conflict, Dialogue and Peace: Speaking Truth to Power



The Elders Panel Discussion at the Sheldonian Theatre, Oxford

On Thursday 29th May 2014 the Centre hosted a Panel Discussion with the Elders on ‘Conflict, Dialogue and Peace: Speaking Truth to Power’ at the Sheldonian Theatre in Oxford. The Panel Discussion (moderated by the Centre’s Director) formed part of a series of events and lectures inaugurated by HRH The Prince of Wales in 1993 in his lecture, ‘Islam and the West’. Other events in

Elders present at the event included Martti Ahtisaari (former President of Finland) and Ela Bhatt (Founder, Self-Employed Women’s Association, India). The Elders were accompanied by their Advisory Council and spoke to a capacity Sheldonian audience.

the series have included the lectures by Nelson Mandela in 1997 and Kofi Annan in 1999.

The Elders on the panel were Kofi Annan (former UN Secretary-General), Jimmy Carter (former US President); Hina Jilani (Human Rights lawyer) and Mary Robinson (former President of Ireland). Other

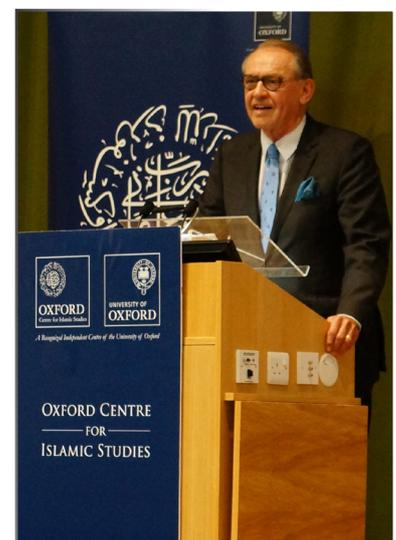
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United Nations Deputy Secretary General lectures on The United Nations and the Muslim World

The Centre hosted a lecture on Wednesday 4 June by the Deputy Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr Jan Eliasson. Mr Eliasson also served, in the course of a distinguished diplomatic career, as Swedish Ambassador in Washington and later to the UN, as President of the UN General Assembly and as the UN’s first Under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs.

Drawing on his extensive international experience, he discussed the role of the United Nations in three key areas: maintaining international peace and security, promoting development and protecting human rights, identifying in particular the linkages between all three responsibilities. He also analysed the impact of change in the broader international landscape and the implications for multilateral action, including in the Muslim world.

In discussion a wide range of issues were addressed, including current conflicts, as in Syria and Palestine, but also longer term global issues, such as water security and population. The vote of thanks was proposed by Lord Hannay of Chiswick, a former British Ambassador to the United Nations in New York.



Mr Jan Eliasson

Atlas Project Summit 2014

The annual review of the Atlas Project took place in Oxford in June and July 2014. The five-week 'Atlas Project Summit' brought together the full Atlas team, under the direction of Dr. Farhan Nizami, including Senior Visiting Fellow Dr David Damrel, Senior Research Fellow Dr Moin Nizami, Junior Research Fellows Dr Fouzia Farooq Ahmed and Dr Megan Robb. Additionally, the summit participants included Cartographer Dr Alex Kent and Designer Ms Grace Fussell.

The Summit assessed the current status of the project, identified and organised the work to be done and established a method, process, and timetable to complete the remaining Atlas work. The team consulted with the publisher, University Press (New York), on technical specifications and publication details.

Scholars

The Centre hosted an end-of-year reception for its 29 Scholars many of whom are departing Oxford for pastures new. The Centre wishes them all the best and hopes they will be active alumni in the years to come. Selection of a 2014/15 cohort was underway and, as this Newsletter went to press, four scholarships had been awarded with a further six under consideration.

Director General, ECSSR launches his new book:

Prospects for the American Age: Sovereignty and Influence in the New World Order



The Director of the Centre and Dr Jamal Al-Suwaidi

The Centre had the pleasure of hosting Dr Jamal Al-Suwaidi, Director General of the Emirates Centre for Strategic Studies and

Research, for the launch of his new book *Prospects for the American Age: Sovereignty and Influence in the New World Order*.

The book launch was held at Rhodes House where guests were able to have their copies of the book signed. Presentations about the main themes of the work encouraged lively discussion over lunch held in Dr al-Suwaidi's honour. The Director General also visited the Centre's New Building. This event preceded the book's launch at the London Book Fair.

Centre seminars on

Representations of Islam and Society

In Trinity Term, the Centre hosted a seminar series on 'Representations of Islam and Society: Emerging Perspectives'. The series, convened by the Centre's Sultan bin Abdul Aziz Fellow Dr Mohammad Talib, focused on how contemporary social sciences view Islam and its foundational practices in the diverse contexts of the Muslim world. The speakers and topics included:

The Revd Robin Griffith-Jones, Temple Church and King's College London, *Islam and English Law and Developments Since the Controversy*; Dr Mark Johnson, University of Hull, *Pilgrim*

Stories: Filipino Muslim Migrant Workers in Saudi Arabia; Dr Kostas Retsikas, SOAS, *The Other Side of the Gift: Soliciting Zakat in Indonesia*; Dr Milly Williamson, Brunel University, *Representations of Islam and the Issue of Free Speech: A Case of the UK and French Press*; Dr Hazem Kandil, University of Cambridge, *Unlocking the World of Muslim Brothers in Egypt*; Professor Magnus Marsden, University of Sussex, *Afghan Merchants' Trading Worlds across Modern Frontiers*; Professor Niloofar Haeri, Johns Hopkins University, *In the Presence of the Divine: An Ethnographic Study of Praying among Muslim Women in Iran*.

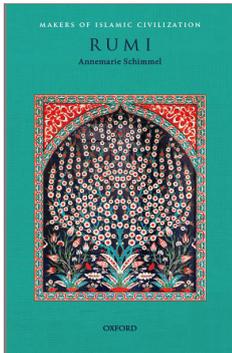
Noah Fellow lectures on Islamic Science

Professor George Saliba, Professor of Arabic and Islamic Science at the Department of Middle East and Asian Languages at Columbia University, was the Centre's new Mohammad Noah Visiting Fellow during Trinity term. As part of his Fellowship, he delivered two lectures at the Centre on "Al Kindi on Halley's Comet" and "Adam Smith on the Decline of Islamic Science". The latter lecture sought to explain that the decline in economic, social and political events and movements often

associated with the decline of sciences in the Islamic world was a phenomenon experienced by other cultures and non-European regions.

The Noah foundation also sponsored Professor Saliba to deliver this lecture in Malaysia. He spoke at the Universiti Tun Abdul Razak in Kuala Lumpur on 26 May 2014. Professor Saliba's contribution has complemented the continued efforts of the Centre to re-examine the role of Islamic Science.

Two new volumes published in the *Makers of Islamic Civilisation Series*



Two new volumes in the *Makers of Islamic Civilisation* series have been published by Oxford University Press. The first is a study of *Rumi* by Annemarie Schimmel, former Professor at Harvard University.

Jalaluddin Rumi (1207-1273) is the best known and arguably the greatest exponent of the mystical tradition in Islam. The *Masnavi*, Rumi's longest and most fully realised poetic work, remains, in the eastern lands of Islam, the most extensively read and revered text after the Qur'an. Perhaps more surprisingly, at least to those still unfamiliar with his writings, Rumi is also often cited as the most widely read poet today in the United States tradition.

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Speaking Truth to Power

As the Director stated in his introduction to the discussion, The Elders represent an unparalleled wealth of experience in statecraft, leadership and diplomacy and, in the words of their founder Nelson Mandela, have been gathered with the mission to 'speak truth to power'.



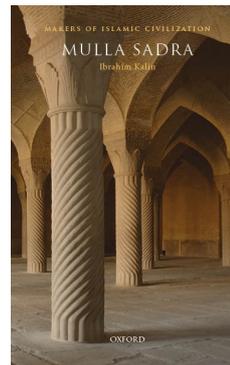
The Elders Panel Discussion

Introducing the panel discussion, the Chair of the Elders, Mr Kofi Annan, reiterated the commitment to use their collective experience and influence in the service of peace, justice and human rights and defined their three primary goals as: a just and inclusive global community, freedom from fear and freedom from want.

Themes addressed by The Elders included how to resolve conflict and advance human

The second volume is a study of *Mullah Sadra* by Ibrahim Kalin, an advisor to the Prime Minister's Office, Turkey.

Mullā Sadrā (1572–1640), one of the most prominent figures of the later Islamic intellectual tradition, undertook to revise philosophy as both logical analysis and spiritual exercise. Sadrā's 'Transcendent Wisdom' is based on the fundamental insight that all things derive their reality and truth from the all-inclusive reality of existence. Ibrahim Kalin taught Islamic Studies at Georgetown University and was the founding director of the SETA Foundation.



Journal of Islamic Studies

Issue 25 Number 2

The latest issue of the Journal of Islamic Studies contains articles by Muhammad Rustom on Ibn 'Arabī's Letter to Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī: A Study and Translation; Charles Weller on Religious-Cultural Revivalism as Historiographical Debate: Contending Claims in the Post-Soviet Kazakh Context; Sergey Abashin on A Prayer for Rain: Practising Being Soviet and Muslim; and A Note on The End of Islam in Medieval Hungary: Old Mistakes and Some New Results by Nora Berend. The issue also contains 17 book reviews of some of the most recent publications about Islam and the Muslim World.

Friends and Stewards of Christ Church Cathedral Visit

The Friends and Stewards of Christ Church Cathedral were welcomed to the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies' New Building in June. Forty Friends and Stewards were given a tour of the New Building where they were informed about the Centre by its Registrar, Mr Richard Makepeace, and its Home Bursar, Ms Rosemary Frame. The group took part in an interactive session where Dr Afifi Al-Akiti, the Centre's KFAS Fellow in Islamic Studies, elaborated the basic tenets of Islam.

rights, what 'good governance' involves, how to address sectarianism and ethnic division, and why women have a crucial role to play in peacebuilding. The Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University, Professor Andrew Hamilton, proposed the vote of thanks.

Working publicly and through private diplomacy, the Elders engage with global leaders and civil society to analyze and resolve conflict, to challenge injustice, to promote good governance and to inspire ethical leadership.

Visit of the High Commissioner for Malaysia

The new High Commissioner for Malaysia, HE Dato' Ahmad Rasidi Hazizi, who assumed his role in January, was invited to the Centre in May, where he was welcomed and briefed on the close relationship and joint projects between the Centre and Malaysia. His Excellency also visited the New Building, where he signed the visitor's book and was able to see the Malaysia Auditorium. A lunch was held in his honour with senior members of the Centre.

Roundtable with UN High Representative for the Alliance of Civilisations



HE Mr Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser signing the Memorandum of Understanding with the Director of the Centre

On Monday 9 June the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies hosted a visit by HE Mr Nassir Abdul Aziz Al-Nasser, the United Nations Secretary General's High Representative for the Alliance of Civilisations (AOC). This was his second visit to speak at the Centre as he lectured in Oxford at the Centre's invitation on 1 March 2012 in his then capacity as President

of the United Nations General Assembly.

During his visit, the High Representative addressed an attentive audience on the activities and priorities of the AOC and invited views on the way forward for its mission of encouraging international cooperation and dialogue and promoting mutual respect. The High Representative was then entertained to a dinner at the Centre, at which discussion continued.

The visit was also the occasion for the signature of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Alliance of Civilisations and the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, which provides the basis for a range of cooperation in the years ahead in pursuit of shared objectives, especially in the educational sphere.



For more information and updates about the Centre's work, please visit our website www.oxcis.ac.uk or "Like" the page "Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies" on Facebook.